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ABSTRACT

The retelling of a familiar story is analyzed as a narrative event, particularly when the story is told by more than one person in a group. Three important functions of retelling a familiar story are identified: (1) to foster group rapport; (2) to ratify group membership; and (3) to convey group values. Often the three functions co-exist in the same narrative event, while one function may dominate a whole narrative or section of it. For each function, the analysis draws on one or more narratives or narrative segments, transcribed here, and focuses on forms of interaction, turn-taking, verb forms, and use of language. Familiar stories are tellable under different circumstances from original stories, depending on the dynamics of the narrative event itself rather than on its newsworthiness. Structural markers of re-told tales include prefaces such as "the story about" and questions beginning with "remember." Participants check their own recollection of the story with open-ended statements and requests for confirmation. Retelling often serves an informing function because participants gain new insights into the events narrated through dynamic give-and-take. Contains 49 references. (MSE)

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Collaborative Narration of Familiar Stories in Conversation

Neal R. Norrick

Consideration of narrative events built around stories already familiar to the participants offers a special perspective on conversational storytelling, because it emphasizes those aspects of narration beyond information exchange, problem solving and so on. In this paper I seek to show that the retelling of familiar stories has at least three functions: (1) fostering group rapport; (2) ratifying group membership; and (3) conveying group values. Moreover, we shall see that familiar stories exhibit characteristic structures, conditions on tellability and participation rights. Familiar stories are prefaced so as to justify their retelling on the basis of the opportunity they offer for co-narration, which in turn allows participants to modulate rapport and demonstrate group membership.

In free conversation a new story must be "reportable" in the sense of Labov: A would-be narrator must be able to defend the story as relevant and newsworthy to get and hold the floor and escape censure at its conclusion, as Polanyi argues. According to current theories of conversational narrative, retelling familiar stories should not occur at all; yet familiar stories regularly appear, and co-narration of such stories occurs quite commonly, especially within groups where some of the participants were present during the events reported as well as during previous narrations. Moreover, retold stories are typically

prefaced in ways which label them as unoriginal, and yet these signals animate participants to involvement rather than cuing them to question the relevance and tellability of the stories. Apparently the tellability of familiar stories hinges not on their content, but on the dynamics of the narrative event itself. Story content need not be relevant or newsworthy if co-narration holds the promise of high involvement, as described by Tannen; it is precisely the familiarity of story content which influences participation rights, since it presents the opportunity for significant co-narration. We shall be looking at structural markers of retold tales as well as the dynamics and functions of retelling. By concentrating on narrative events where the exchange of information counts for little we should get a clearer view of the other functions narration fulfills in group behavior.

This investigation is informed both by my interest in narration and my research on repetition in discourse generally. Repetition of sounds, words, phrases and sentences occurs with various functions within the turn, speech act and speech event; but we also find repetition of whole turns and speech events. Indeed, repetition is constitutive for certain linguistic units such as the proverb and cliche, just as retelling is for anecdotes and jokes. Probably most stories are potentially repeatable but not necessarily repeated. Still, some stories may be narrated over and over for different audiences or even repeated at separate times for a single audience. For a familiar story to crop up in everyday conversation and for the

participants to collaborate in retelling it, there must be factors at work beyond the information value of the tale itself. It is these factors I want to get at in the paragraphs to come.

In this investigation, I distinguish the story from the performance or the narrative event, as well as separating the story from the past events narrated; it is in this way that we can be said to be retelling a single story, as Polanyi argues. The bare skeleton of temporally ordered narrative clauses constitutes the substratum of any particular performance, which will generally flesh it out with an abstract, an orientation, dialogue and evaluation, a resolution, and a coda, as described by Labov. The same real-world events may provide the stuff for several stories, just as the "same story" will receive different narrative treatments from different tellers, indeed even a single teller will vary the narrative form to fit the particular occasion. But the variation of story in performance is probably most obvious in cases of polyphonic narration in natural conversation, where no single participant can control the course of the narrative, and multiple voices vie for the right to formulate the point of the story. This underscores the nature of telling as a narrative event, a speech event among others with its own characteristic contexts, functions, participation rights, message forms and contents.

In the following I will identify and develop three important functions of retelling stories, in particular of co-narrating them in a group. In various guises these three functions appear

in other forms of conversational interaction; and each of them is implicit or has received at least passing mention in work on narration in free conversation. What is original here is my focus on the functions of re-telling stories already heard. I will argue, first, that we retell familiar stories to foster group rapport. Second, we co-narrate familiar stories to ratify group membership. And third, we retell group stories which portray shared values. Often all three objectives coexist in the same narrative event, while one function may dominate a whole narrative or a whole section of it. With this in mind, I have sought to choose narrative passages illustrative of one function primarily and to treat them in the three separate sections below.

RETELLING AND RAPPORT

My notion of rapport grows out of Politeness Theory as developed by Lakoff, Brown & Levinson and Tannen. Rapport is the shared sense of camaraderie created by reciprocal acts of positive politeness, redounding to the enhancement of personal image for all participants. Rapport grows when others endorse the personality we present, which includes accepting and positively evaluating our stories, opinions, and other conversational contributions. The coordinated give-and-take of conversational interaction characterized as "high involvement style" by Tannen naturally accrues to rapport as well, since participants constantly complete, continue, borrow and build on each others' contributions. Moreover, if the topic of conversation recalls happy memories or conduces to laughter, as in the passage below,

this serves to further enhance rapport.

It often seems that the principal goal of storytelling in conversational interaction consists in reliving pleasant moments; thus we frequently retell an already familiar story with little information exchange and no new point to make. This desire to recreate and re-enjoy a common experience motivates my first example, which is a family story, both in the sense that the events described involved the whole family and that it is co-told by these same family members. Like other close-knit groups, families have their own stories--stories recalled and repeated spontaneously during regular interaction between group members. And though these stories may be retold primarily for amusement, they function simultaneously to remind members, most especially children, of a common past and shared values, so that they enhance feelings of a family's identity as a group.

The story Pat introduces in the passage on my first slide provides a typical example of a family story jointly constructed by two or more family members. The participants are the four members of a nuclear family. Pat and Ralph are the parents of two college-age daughters, Amy and Mary, who are home for the holidays. Only these four family members are present, and all four were involved to some degree in the events rehearsed in the narrative, though Pat identifies Amy as the primary character in "the story about you [i.e. Amy] and the little chipmunk." Pat has been describing a party she attended where she related this same story for the amusement of outsiders, but here the story is

told as one familiar to everyone in the immediate family.

CHIPMUNK

Pat: And I told the story about you and the little chipmunk out in the garage.
Mary: Oh [huhhuhhuhhuh.]
Amy: [I kept- I kept-] I was just thinking about that the other day. That thing scared the heck out of me.
Pat: With all with all the:
Amy: It was twice.
Mary: Huhhuhhuh.
Amy: It was twice. And the first time, "There's a rat in there, there's a big mouse in there. I saw it."
Mary: Hehhehhehheh.
Amy: "No, there's nothing in there." "Yes, I saw it."
Mary: I wouldn't believe her.
Pat: Well I went out. Remember, and set the bag- it was a bag of cans. That was when we were looking for the golf ball, cause you hit the ball in the can.
Amy: Yeah and then you found its little cubby holes in a box or something.
Pat: Well, what- what-
Mary: You found all the seeds, didn't you?
Pat: All the seeds.
Ralph: All the seeds in a plastic bag.
Pat: Right by the wood out there. And when we moved the wood to clean it there was the whole thing. It must have sat against the wood and then ate all hehhuh the huh [su(huhh)unflowers.]
Ralph: [All the] sunflower seeds. All the shells were in [the bag.]
Pat: [There were] shells everywhere.
Amy: Yeah and you guys wouldn't believe me.
Mary: Well I guess there was [something there.]
Pat: [Well I didn't] the first time but the second time I did.
Amy: Sca(ha)red me bo(ho)th [times hehehehe.]
Mary: [haha]haha.
Amy: And of course it happened to me. You know, nobody else.
Pat: Little sucker was living in the garage and
Ralph: Living [it up. Living high on the hog.]
Pat: [had it made. He was in out of] the cold and he had something to eat. And, and by the way, we have to get a bird feeder. I'll have to talk to Ma and go to that Audubon place.

All the typical features of collaboratively constructed group stories are present here. First, there are explicit markers that

the story is already known. Thus Pat prefaces the passage with a definite description "the story about you and the little chipmunk," which presupposes general familiarity with its basic gist; and she says remember as she gets into the actual narrative at line 14. Participants also check on the accuracy and completeness of their own recollections with open-ended statements like Amy's "and then you found its little cubby holes in a box or something" in lines 17-18 or with explicit questions, often in the form of a statement plus a tag as in line 20 "You found all the seeds, didn't you?" Conversely, participants confirm each other's statements, as does Amy in beginning two contributions with "yeah and" at lines 17 and 30. This give-and-take with its successive stages of agreement fosters rapport.

Second, there is substantial co-telling. Amy immediately ratifies the familiar character of the story by claiming that she had been thinking of it just the other day. At the same time, she makes a bid to become co-teller of the story. After all Pat has identified Amy as the protagonist, and Amy wastes no time in trying to place her emotional response at the center of interest in the story. Participants demonstrate knowledge of the story and hence group membership particularly through addition of details. Ralph speaks little overall, but when he does, he contributes salient details, first that the seeds were "in a plastic bag" at line 22 and then that "the shells were in the bag" in lines 27-28.

Third, there is often disagreement about details and

especially about the point of the story. As a consequence of differential memories and points of view, participants correct each other's accounts and vie for the right to formulate the story's point. When Amy says, "Yeah and you guys wouldn't believe me" at line 30, Pat objects, "Well I didn't the first time but the second time I did." Amy seeks to construct the story around her fright and her indignation at failing to convince the others of her credibility, but Pat and Ralph conspire to focus the story on the chipmunk's successful survival strategy: their joint assessments to this effect stand unchallenged as the final evaluation of the story following Amy's last gasp with "And of course it happened to me. You know, nobody else" in lines 36-37. Again Ralph's final contribution is short on words but long on meaning because he casts it in idiomatic and proverbial language: "Living it up. Living high on the hog." And Pat makes a closing determination that the story was about animals in winter by moving to the related topic of feeding birds. Agreement on the final point of a story not only redounds to rapport, it also serves to fix the story as a building block in the family history.

NARRATION AS RATIFICATION OF GROUP MEMBERSHIP

In the literature on conversational storytelling, much is made of narrating as a "bid for power" and of asserting the right to participate in the narrative event, but within the family, participation in co-narration seems more concerned with demonstrating membership, that is with belonging in the family.

Co-narration ratifies family membership and values not just de jura by birth, but de facto by producing shared memories, feelings and values. Children gain full family membership to the degree that they can contribute to family co-narration in appropriate ways. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and the like may participate as family members in the retelling of some stories familiar to them, while they are excluded from others involving only the nuclear family. Thus in the pair of examples below, an aunt plays a central role in one retelling only to be sidelined in the following narrative event.

At the same time the first passage illustrates a fairly common practice, whereby group members relate recurrent shared past experiences in generalized form without reference to any specific instance. Instead of pure past tense clauses in temporal order as required by Labov's definition of narrative, these generalized collaborative exchanges thrive on verb phrases with would and would be -ing along with used to forms. Also, explicit first person we pronouns frequently give way to second person you with general reference. This passage provides a typical example of the sort of exchange I have in mind, where participants recount a recurrent experience they had with a particular hair-dresser. Annie and Jean are cousins in their early thirties; Helen is Annie's mother and Jean's aunt. All three have lived in close proximity their whole lives, so that they may be said to form a loose family group. They are gathered before a late-afternoon holiday dinner in the living room of the

house where Annie and Helen live.

TIPSY

Annie: And I always thought that her and Vance just were great [together.]
Jean: [Yeah.] Used to [get s-]
Helen: [They were both] good.
Annie: Yeah. They were really good.
Jean: You could go over there around the holidays and get smashed before you left [the place.]
Helen: [Oh yeah.]
Jean: We used to have the last appointment, right? Remember, the two of us would go?
Annie: Yeah, yeah.
Jean: "Want some wine girls?"
"Sure we'll have a glass of wine."
You walk out of there you're half tipsy.
Annie: You were under the dryers.
Jean: Well sure. And he'd be pouring the wine and we were tipsy by the time we walked out of that place.
Annie: Then he moved all the way out at Rand Road.
Jean: Near the town show, remember?
Annie: Yeah.
Jean: [We went there.]
Annie: [We used to go there.] And then we went on to Union Road, when he was there.
Jean: Yeah. Yeah. We followed him around.

Here again we find many of the same devices characterizing the exchange as a recollection of shared past experience. Jean initiates the co-telling with an ostensible request for confirmation in the tag question "We used to have the last appointment, right?" at line 9, though she does not pause long for a reply and receives none, so that the question stands simply as a marker of shared background knowledge. Then with "Remember, the two of us would go?" Jean explicitly seeks testimony from Annie, who this time complies with "Yeah, yeah." Jean again questions Annie with remember at line 19, again receiving a positive yeah in return. Then Jean's "Well sure" in response to Annie's "You were under the dryers" at line 15 and Annie's near

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repetition of Jean's "We went there" as "We used to go there" at line 22 count as instances of checking details and coordinating accounts of the shared experience. All these markers of shared experience count as evidence of group membership.

Co-telling is quite prevalent, though Jean clearly remains the primary narrator. Helen confirms Jean's basic point about drinking at the hairdresser's at line 8 with "Oh yeah," and Annie not only confirms Jean's claims but adds the salient detail about being "under the dryers" at line 15. But Annie's co-telling veers off in the direction of telling what happened to Vance and his partner, which suggests another point about collaborative family tales, namely that disagreements during co-narration tend to arise especially about the point of the story. From Jean's perspective, the story focusses on the availability, consumption and effects of alcohol at the hair-dresser's, but Annie is far more concerned with Vance as a good hairdresser and how the sisters followed him as he moved around. Jean comes around to this point of view in the end, agreeing with Annie and summarizing the story in line with her interpretation: "Yeah. Yeah. We followed him around." This final agreement about the point of the narration caps off an interaction already filled with signals of shared group identity and high rapport.

Another story with a more narrowly familial focus in this same setting demonstrates how group dynamics can shift based on family membership. Annie's younger sister Lynn had remained silent during the foregoing talk of hair-dressing because she had

at the time been too young to accompany her older sister, cousin and mother on trips to the beauty parlor. But as this conversation continues, Lynn finds occasion to introduce a story of a third sister, Jennifer, who is not present in the group, which suddenly makes their cousin Jean a partial outsider for the moment as someone not living in the same house when the reported events took place.

During most of the immediately preceding interaction, Jean had controlled the floor, and she holds forth as long as she can while Lynn attempts to begin her story. Even then, Jean takes advantage of the first pause to attempt again to ratify her status as a family member by hopefully contributing a detail to the story, albeit in the form of an uncertain request for confirmation: "She put something on her head, a bag or something?" And as soon as Lynn appears to have finished her story, Jean again assumes control of the floor with a comment about her own hair, which leads back into more general talk not focussed on the nuclear family.

POODLE

Jean: Annie gave me a permanent once, too.
Lynn: Annie did?
Jean: Once and only once.
{general laughter}
I would never allow her to touch my hair again.
Lynn: Well remember the time-
Jean: Yoooh. Talk about afro when afro wasn't even in style.
My god.
Annie: Well see I started [something.]
Jean: [Frizz ball.] I was a frizz ball.
It wasn't even afro. I was just frizz.
Lynn: Remember [when-]
Jean: [It was] terrible.

Lynn: Jennifer, the first time Jennifer had a perm when she came home. It was the funniest thing.
Jean: She put something on her head, a bag or something?
Lynn: She wore her-
Annie: Huh huh huh.
Lynn: Well she wore her-
Helen: "Hair ball, hair ball." Yeah. Because she-
Annie: She just always had this hood on. And she ran right upstairs,
Lynn: No. First she threw her bag up the stairs, almost hit me.
Annie: Oh yeah.
Lynn: Then "bang." The door slams. And I'm like- I was on the phone. I was like "Ah I don't know. My sister just walked in. I think something's wrong." And [then she ran up the stairs.]
Annie: [Oh that's it.] "I look like a damn poodle." {general laughter}
Lynn: Like sobbing, "I look like a poodle."
Helen: Aw huhhuhhuh.
Annie: Then she came down to eat and she'd wrapped a towel around her head.
Helen: Aw huhhuhhuh.
Lynn: She barricaded herself for a while in her room.
Jean: My hair takes like this. I mean.
Annie: Yeah.

Lynn first announces her story with: "Well remember the time-" at line 6, before Jean will let her have the floor. As we saw above, the preface with remember provides a way of explicitly marking a story as familiar to at least some participants. When Jean again seems to have finished, Lynn reiterates her remember-preface at line 12 and allows Jean one final evaluative comment before plunging into the story about Jennifer's first perm.

Both Annie and Helen are involved in co-telling the story. Helen adds only a bit of dialogue at line 20 and sympathetic aws at lines 33 and 36, but she makes the most of this contribution, since, as Tannen notes, animating dialogue illustrates shared experience. By contrast, Annie makes extensive contributions but receives corrections from Lynn on almost every detail she adds.

Thus Annie's description on line 21 "She just always had this hood on" is allowed to stand, but her following statement that "She ran right upstairs" elicits a prompt no from Lynn, who proceeds to place herself in the center of the story's action. Again when Annie attempts to add a piece of dialogue at line 30: "I look like a damn poodle," Lynn objects to her tone, saying it was "Like sobbing" and rendering Jennifer's sentence as sad rather than angry, and deleting the damn. Finally, even Annie's statement beginning at line 34 with "Then she came down to eat" displeases Lynn, who insists that Jennifer first "barricaded herself for a while in her room." Although Lynn has a hard time getting started and has difficulty responding to Jean's query about what Jennifer wore on her head, she shepherds the story through to the end, as becomes quite clear in Annie's concurring responses to Lynn's corrections: "Oh yeah" at line 25 and "Oh that's it" at line 30.

Even without a final coda expressing agreement on the evaluation of a past event or on the point of the story about it, collaborative narration serves to ratify group membership and modulate rapport in multiple ways, first because it allows participants to re-live pleasant common experiences, second because it confirms the long-term bond they share, and third because the experience of collaborative narration itself redounds to feelings of belonging.

NARRATION TO CONVEY SHARED VALUES

We have just seen how family membership is negotiated anew for each narrative event. Family members, as defined loosely or tightly by their social roles, may jockey for insider status in the course of an interaction. Of course, nuclear family members themselves sometimes tussle over the right to co-tell a story or to summarize its point; but the demonstration of membership goes beyond shared past events for co-narration to the demonstration of shared values. Even non-family members can gain a degree of acceptance by espousing values dear to the family; this is accomplished most expeditiously by constructing stories from one's own past which parallel those told in the family to which one seeks admission. Thus a person who cannot participate in co-telling a story familiar to group members can at least tell a story like it which repeats its action and reiterates its values. This strategy becomes obvious in the next passage, where a daughter-in-law attempts to ratify her <u>de facto</u> membership in her adopted family by telling a story from her own past. By fitting her second story about thrift to her mother-in-law's preceding one, the daughter-in-law attests to her own values matching those of the family she has married into. Here we move beyond the retelling of a single story to the telling of a parallel story.

This example demonstrates how family stories can serve to define characteristic family values vis-a-vis outsiders. In particular, matriarch Lydia stands for frugality, which she learned from her mother and grandmother, namely the "Grandma

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Imhof" described as "the stingy one" by Lydia's husband Frank. Although they laugh about frugality and claim to have been embarrassed by the frugal habits of their parents, all the family members tacitly endorse it as a primary (family) virtue. Ned and Brandon as sons of Lydia and Frank have, as it were, imbibed frugality, while their respective spouses, Claire and Sherry, have had to establish their in-group status through demonstrations of frugal behavior and, of course, appropriate stories. Sherry is particularly eager to confirm her family membership, since she has more recently married into the family and comes from a background less obviously frugal than does Claire. The conversation took place at the home of Ned and Claire where the others are visiting; most of the participants remain seated at the dining room table, while Claire and Brandon move back and forth to and from the adjacent kitchen.

DARNED DISH TOWELS

Frank: Grandma Imhof, she was the stingy one.
Ned: Claire has darned dish towels.
Frank: Her mother did it. Sure.
Lydia: Well see I said if you grew up in a house where your mother [patched washcloths].
Ned: [Remember darning, Sherry?]
Sherry: I was going- "What are darned dish towels."
Ned: Well. It's when you don't want to say damn dish towels.
{General laughter}
Don't you call that process darning?
Lydia: But my mother just put them under the sewing machine and took two washcloths and made one. And patched the middle of a washcloth when it was worn out.
Ned: Your mother didn't invent that huh huh huh.
Lydia: And I said when you grow up like that it's hard to get with this world that throws things away.
Claire: {arriving} Here are darned dish towels.
Sherry: Huhhuh darned dish towels.

Lydia: But were you ever embarrassed, Claire? When you invited friends to your house, did you ever have to be embarrassed? I was embarrassed when the girls from town came.

{Laughter from Sherry, Brandon and others}

Ned: Our mother was embarrassed?

Lydia: And saw my mother's patched washcloths. I tried to hide them really fast.

{Sherry and Lydia in two-party conversation from here on}

Sherry: We had a- my mom always had like a dish cloth that had holes in it? And I always still get holes in them before I throw them away. And he's like going, "Don't you think we need a new dish towel?" And she always had an old green pad that she used to scrub the pans with. And we always called it that ratty green pad. And so in my mind it's supposed to be like really awful and ratty. Before you throw it away huhhahaha. And once a year I buy two new dish cloths whether I need them or not hehehe.

Lydia: Khuh khuhhuh.

The whole family has gotten onto the topic of frugality--or stinginess as Frank insists on calling it--which suggests for Ned the example of darning dish towels from his wife's family and for Lydia her own mother's patching washcloths. Then in the midst of talk about darning dish towels, Lydia pieces together her story about being embarrassed when "the girls from town" came and saw her mother's patched washcloths. Apparently not just thrift itself but suffering embarrassment for it from outsiders assumes importance for Lydia. And although Lydia declares her embarrassment about her mother's thrifty habits in such a way as to elicit laughter from her listeners, it should be clear from what she has said before how she values frugality. And it should also be clear that "the girls from town" represent the rejected wasteful attitudes Lydia cannot get used to.

It is most certainly clear to Sherry, who immediately seeks to paint herself in Lydia's colors by constructing a parallel

"second story" in the sense of Sacks. Sherry's second story corresponds to Lydia's original in multiple ways. First, it casts Sherry in the same role as a daughter to a frugal mother. Note how Sherry initially begins her story at line 28 with "We had a-" then backtracks and self-corrects, placing her mother up front with "My mom always had . . ." Then it shows her taking over her mother's thrifty habits--despite objections from her husband, that is Lydia's son. And finally it lets her express the sort of laughing embarrassment about the habits which Lydia did, though she does not identify a particular outsider group like "the girls from town." Note especially the final partially formulaic statement that she buys new dish cloths "whether I need them or not" with accompanying laughter, which Lydia echoes. This degree of congruency between a second story and its original model goes beyond the sorts of structural parallelism Sacks describes, namely portraying the teller in the same role in a similar situation; we have here also the same emotional reaction toward other characters with regard to parallel habits, namely embarrassment vis-a-vis the girls from town for frugal behavior. This is precisely what we might expect in the sort of family story at issue here.

In fact, Sherry may feel it is particularly important at this juncture to record her solidarity with Lydia as a frugal woman for several reasons. First, the more senior daughter-in-law Claire has just physically produced darned dish cloths to attest to her frugality. Second, Sherry has just admitted not

even knowing exactly what darning is: in response to Ned's needling her with "Remember darning, Sherry?" at line 6, she replies, "I was going- 'What are darned dish towels'," though she may have honestly interpreted darned as the euphemism for damned suggested by Ned's pun. And third, Lydia explicitly directed her story at Claire with her question "But were you ever embarrassed, Claire?" at line 19. Apparently Lydia has no doubt about Claire's frugality, seeking only confirmation from her with regard to embarrassment vis-a-vis "the girls from town." But Sherry feels the need to attest both to her thrift and to her embarrassment for it--and her story seems perfectly constructed to accomplish these ends in a low key way, while Frank, Ned and Brandon enter into a separate conversation of their own.

CONCLUSIONS

Consideration of twice-told tales, of narrative events built around stories already familiar to the participants, offers a special perspective on conversational storytelling, because it emphasizes those aspects of narration beyond information, problem solving and so on. In particular, we have seen that the retelling of familiar stories has three important functions, all of which may coexist in the same narrative event, though one function often dominates a whole narrative or a whole section of it. First, we retell stories to foster group rapport. Second, we co-narrate familiar stories to ratify group membership. And third, we retell stories which reveal group values. Further, listeners unable to participate in the co-narration of group

stories respond with parallel stories of their own which portray shared values.

We have seen that familiar stories are tellable under different circumstances than original stories. In free conversation a new story is tellable if the narrator can defend it as relevant and newsworthy. The tellability of familiar stories depends not on their newsworthy content, but on the dynamics of the narrative event itself: it is precisely the familiarity of story content which offers the opportunity for significant co-narration. Retold stories are typically prefaced in ways which label them as unoriginal, which, however, incites participants to involvement rather than cuing them to question the relevance or originality of the narratives.

We identified structural markers of retold tales such as prefaces including definite descriptions with the phrase "the story about" and questions with the word "remember." Participants typically check their own recollections of the story with open-ended statements containing indefinites like "or something" and requests for confirmation in the form of explicit questions and statements with question tags; they engage in substantial co-narration, contributing details and dialogue. Despite disagreements about facts and competition in determining the point of view, participants frequently confirm each other's statements and negotiate agreement on the final point of the story.

We saw that retelling can serve an informing function even

when the story is known to the participants, since both the primary teller and the others often gain insight into the events related through the dynamic give-and-take of co-narration. Retelling a particular story or a type of story helps coalesce group perspectives and values. Finally, co-narration modulates rapport, first because it allows participants to re-live pleasant common experiences, second because it confirms the long-term bond they share, and third because the experience of collaborative narration itself redounds to feelings of belonging.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

She's out.	Period shows falling tone in preceding element.
Oh yeah?	Question mark shows rising tone in preceding element.
nine, ten.	Comma indicates a level, continuing intonation.
<u>damn</u>	Italics show heavy stress.
bu- but	A single dash indicates a cut off.
o(ho)kay	Parentheses enclose word-internal laughter.
[at all.]	Aligned brackets enclose simultaneous speech by two
[I just]	or more participants.
says "Oh"	Double quotes mark speech set off by speaker's voice.
{sigh}	Curly braces enclose editorial comments and
	untranscribable elements.

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